

August 4, 2009

Division of Global Migration and Quarantine
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Attn: Part 34 NPRM Comments
1600 Clifton Road, N.E., MS E-08
Atlanta, GA 30333

Re: Letter in support of eliminating HIV travel ban relative to Docket No. CDC – 2008 - 0001

Vermont CARES is the largest and longest-serving HIV/AIDS Service Organization in Vermont. We provide advocacy and outreach designed to better the lives of all people with HIV. In this light, we strongly support lifting the immigration ban on visitors and immigrants living with HIV. We write this letter in response to the CDC's publication in July 2009 in the Federal Register of proposed rulemaking that would remove HIV from the definition of communicable disease of "public health significance."

We support in full this rule change for the following reasons:

- **HIV is not a casually communicable virus.** HIV can only be transmitted by very specific behaviors, and does not spread through airborne or casual contact.
- **A broad ban against travel and immigration by people with HIV is discriminatory and runs counter to national interests and ethics.** This ban has more to do with stigmas, misperceptions, and fears about HIV than it does with science and solid public health protection strategies.
- **This is not the right response to HIV either nationally or internationally.** The United States, by enforcing this ban, is misappropriating resources that could otherwise be used for national or international prevention or treatment efforts. This short-sighted, scientifically unsound, and discriminatory ban wastes resources in a time when prevention and treatment are needed more than ever before because of rising HIV infection rates here and abroad.

For these reasons, we fully support and formally request the removal of HIV from the definition of "communicable diseases of public health significance." Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions about the ramifications of this current travel and immigration ban in Vermont. I can be reached at our Burlington office at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Vermont CARES